

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01  
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15  
ICA-11 IO-13 OES-07 TRSE-00 ACDA-12 OMB-01 /111 W  
-----122832 011008Z /10

R 010919Z MAY 78  
FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7589  
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
AMEMBASSY SEOUL  
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI  
AMCONSUL HONG KONG  
USLO PEKING  
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TOKYO 07850

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1  
TAGS: PINT, PBOR, CH, JA  
SUBJECT: SENKAKUS FALLOUT

REF: TOKYO 7470

SUMMARY: DOMESTIC FALLOUT OF SENKAKUS INCIDENT HAS TEMPO-  
RARILY STRAINED RELATIONSHIPS OF GOJ LEADERS, PRODUCED  
CONSIDERABLE SHOUTING AND NAME-CALLING IN LDP COUNCILS,  
AND REMINDED JAPANESE OF THEIR SECURITY DEPENDENCE ON U.S.  
IMPACT OF INCIDENT SHOULD NOT BE OVERBLOWN, HOWEVER, AS  
WE WOULD EXPECT TRADITIONAL JAPANESE PRO-CHINA ORIENTATION  
SOON TO REASSERT ITSELF. END SUMMARY.

1. WHILE PRC FISHING FLEET REMAINS OFF SENKAKUS (NAHA  
183), NEWS COVERAGE HAS RECEDED TO INSIDE PAGES, MOSTLY  
TO PONDER CHINESE MOTIVES AND ULTIMATE IMPACT OF INCIDENT  
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(TOKYO 7120). MEANWHILE, GOJ POSITION ON INCIDENT IS  
SOLIDIFYING. PM FUKUDA TOLD PRESS APRIL 27 HE WOULD LIKE  
HIGHER-LEVEL PRC CLARIFICATION OF INCURSION THAN THAT  
RECEIVED SO FAR AND WOULD WAIT FOR SITUATION TO SETTLE  
BEFORE CONSIDERING RESUMPTION OF SINO-JAPANESE PEACE AND  
FRIENDSHIP TREATY (PFT) NEGOTIATIONS. STATING HIS INTEN-  
TION TO PROCEED WITH THE TREATY HAD NOT CHANGED, HE ALSO

SOUNDED A CAUTIOUS NOTE. (SINO-JAPANESE FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATION HEAD LIAO CHENG-CHIH APRIL 28 STATEMENT TO INDEPENDENT LOWER HOUSE MEMBER TOKUMA UTSUNOMIYA THAT PRC WOULD TRY TO AVOID REPETITION OF INCIDENT WAS THIRD CHINESE COMMENT TO OPPOSITION POLITICIAN. WHILE NOT UNWELCOME, GOJ WOULD GREATLY PREFER USE OF DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS.)

2. INCIDENT HAS, HOWEVER, EXACERBATED STRAINS AMONG TOP GOVERNMENT LEADERS, IF ONLY TEMPORARILY. FUKUDA, ALWAYS INCLINED TOWARD CAUTION ON PFT, REPORTEDLY WAS SHARPLY ANNOYED AT FM SONODA'S DOWNPLAYING OF SENKAKUS INCURSION SIGNIFICANCE. IT WAS PERCEIVED BY FUKUDA, AND EVEN MORE SO BY HIS SUPPORTERS, AS AN ATTEMPT BY SONODA TO INGRATiate HIMSELF WITH PM-ASPIRANT (AND LDP SEC GEN) OHIRA AT FUKUDA'S EXPENSE. AMONG THOSE MOST ANGERED WAS CHIEF CABINET SECRETARY ABE, WHO DISPLACED SONODA IN THAT POSITION. ABE REMAINS EVEN MORE CAUTIOUS ON PFT THAN FUKUDA AND HAS BEEN IN FOREFRONT OF THOSE CALLING FOR CONSTRUCTION OF HELIPORT, LIGHTHOUSE AND, MOST RECENTLY, A TYPHOON REFUGE PORT IN SENKAKUS TO BUTTRESS JAPANESE TERRITORIAL CLAIMS.

3. INCIDENT HAS ALSO LED TO A DOG FIGHT WITHIN RULING LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY (LDP), REFLECTING NOT ONLY LONG-STANDING SHARP IDEOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES, BUT ALSO INCREASING TENSIONS BETWEEN FUKUDA AND OHIRA CAMPS AS DECEMBER LDP

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PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION APPROACHES. FORMAL LDP CONSIDERATION OF PFT HAS BEEN POSTPONED INDEFINITELY AND, AS MIGHT BE EXPECTED, PFT OPPONENTS HAVE DOMINATED PARTY COUNCILS SINCE SENKAKUS INCURSION. MAIN TARGET OF THEIR CRITICISM HAS BEEN LDP SEC GEN OHIRA, WHO AS FOREIGN MINISTER IN 1972 PROCEEDED WITH SINO-JAPANESE NORMALIZATION ON BASIS OF TACIT (AND APPARENTLY PERSONAL) UNDERSTANDING WITH CHINESE NOT TO RAISE SENKAKUS ISSUE. BY ATTACKING OHIRA, LDP RIGHT-WING CAN GET IN IDEOLOGICAL DIGS, AND ALSO STRIKE BLOW FOR FUKUDA, WHOM MOST HAWKS SUPPORT, IN SUB-SURFACE FUKUDA-OHIRA COMPETITION. INCIDENT WAS THUS TEMPORARY POLITICAL SETBACK FOR OHIRA AND, ALTHOUGH HARDLY A PLUS FOR FUKUDA, WHO HAS BEEN CRITICIZED BOTH BY HAWKS (FOR BEING TOO POSITIVE ON PFT) AND DOVES (FOR BEING TOO NEGATIVE), FUKUDA'S GENERALLY CAUTIOUS STANCE APPEARS WELL-JUSTIFIED IN RETROSPECT. POSSIBLY JUST BECAUSE ISSUE HAS POTENTIAL FOR FUKUDA-OHIRA RECRIMINATIONS, WE WOULD EXPECT ISSUE TO RESURFACE AGAIN SHORTLY.

4. IN WIDER SENSE, CHINESE WITTINGLY OR UNWITTINGLY PROVIDED JAPANESE WITH ANOTHER SHARP REMINDER OF PRECARIOUSNESS OF JAPAN'S SECURITY WITHOUT U.S. SUPPORT.

BROADLY BASED JAPANESE PERCEPTION OF U.S. "WITHDRAWAL" FROM ASIA OF SOME MONTHS' DURATION AND RECENT DOWNING OF KAL PASSENGER JET BY SOVIET FIGHTERS ADDED TO JAPANESE CONCERNS, BUT RESPONSE WAS MIXED. WHILE INCIDENT LED SOME TO POINT TO MORAL THAT JAPANESE MUST GET ALONG WITH CHINESE, A SOMEWHAT LARGER GROUP, SEIZING ON TERRITORIAL ASPECTS OF INCIDENT, STRUCK A NATIONALISTIC CHORD, WHICH PRIME MINISTERIAL HOPEFUL (AND LDP EXECUTIVE COUNCIL CHAIRMAN) NAKASONE WAS HAPPY TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF. FAR MORE GENERAL POPULAR RESPONSE, HOWEVER, WAS TO URGE U.S.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 TOKYO 07850

TO REMAIN IN ASIA MILITARILY, AS PM FUKUDA HAS SAID HE WOULD DO IN HIS IMMINENT CONVERSATION WITH PRESIDENT CARTER. ALL IN ALL, INCIDENT SEEMS LIKELY TO NUDGE BODY POLITIC IN MORE CONSERVATIVE DIRECTION, AT LEAST TEMPORARILY.

5. IN PRODUCING LEADERSHIP STRAINS, EXACERBATING LDP TENSIONS, AND PROMPTING NATIONALIST OVERTONES, SENKAKUS INCIDENT HAS HAD UNUSUAL SHORT-TERM IMPACT. LASTING EFFECT, HOWEVER, SHOULD NOT BE OVERESTIMATED. WHILE INCIDENT WILL NOT BE FORGOTTEN BY BUREAUCRATS AND SECURITY EXPERTS WHOSE TASK IT IS TO REMEMBER SUCH THINGS, MEDIA AND POPULACE CAN BE EXPECTED TO RETURN TO THEIR TRADITIONAL PRO-CHINESE BIAS WITHIN MONTHS, IF NOT WEEKS. SHERMAN

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## Message Attributes

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**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 01 may 1978  
**Decaption Date:** 01 jan 1960  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
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**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
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**Type:** TE  
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**Review Markings:**  
Sheryl P. Walter  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
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20 Mar 2014  
**Markings:** Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014